

NEW HAMPSHIRE
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
PROGRAM
Round 2

Application Guidelines



Please note: these *Application Guidelines* are intended to be used in conjunction with the *Application Form*, *Funding Criteria*, and *Travel Plan* format. All are available at the NHSRTS Web site:

http://www.nh.gov/dot/bureaus/planning/SRTS_home.htm
or from the [coordinator](#).

Program mission

As its name suggests, the purpose of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is to encourage children in kindergarten through eighth grade, who live within approximately two miles of school, to safely make the trip from home to school and back by walking or riding bicycles. This includes students with disabilities.

Background

SRTS is authorized under federal legislation known as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users or "SAFETEA-LU." New Hampshire receives \$1 million per year for five years, most of which will be used to reimburse approved local expenses for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

At the state level, the N.H. Department of Transportation (NHDOT) administers the program in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The potential advantages of walking and bike riding are significant and long lasting. Children who develop an appreciation of physical activity are more likely to remain active into adulthood.

To encourage increased physical activity, the SRTS program works with local schools and their surrounding communities to identify and overcome barriers to safe biking and walking. Schools and their community partners across the state will compete for funding available for projects ranging from bicycle safety courses to sidewalk construction.

A collaborative approach

A SRTS program at the local level will have the greatest chance of succeeding if entities that often work

independently of each other can collaborate. This is why the formation of a SRTS task force is strongly recommended.

Possible members for a local task force include school administrators, principals, school nurses and physical education teachers, parents, students, the PTO/PTA, municipal planners, public works officials, police representatives, walking, biking and other advocacy organizations, and interested residents. (See *Funding Criteria 2.a.*; Question 8 on application form.)

At a minimum, applications **must** include letters of support from both school boards or designee and a municipal body or designee with authority to enter into a binding agreement (e.g. the city council, board of aldermen, board of). (*Funding Criteria 2.b.*; Questions 3 and 14 on application.)

Flexibility

A major goal of the program is to encourage participation and decision-making at the local level. Neighborhood schools and their communities - including municipal government - have the flexibility to find solutions that will work at the city or town level.

Infrastructure and non-infrastructure

Between 10 and 30 percent of the federal funds is earmarked for "non-infrastructure" projects that will include both planning and efforts to educate and encourage children, parents and motorists about safe commuting by foot or bicycle. The balance will be used for "infrastructure" projects, the physical changes that can include sidewalks, bike routes, safe road crossings, signs and pavement markings.

NHDOT recognizes that some New Hampshire communities have active SRTS or similar programs in place. Others are just beginning to consider the program or are in the preliminary phase of forming SRTS task forces. These guidelines and the related funding criteria are designed to help communities expand and improve existing programs while encouraging other communities to take new initiatives. (*Funding Criteria 1.*)

The 5Es

A comprehensive approach known as the "5Es" is at the heart of SRTS. The approach combines non-infrastructure programs with any construction projects designed to create and/or enhance existing and potential safe walking and bicycling routes from home to school. Projects will be evaluated on how well they address each of the "Es":

- **Evaluation**
- **Education**
- **Encouragement**
- **Enforcement**
- **Engineering**

Non-infrastructure

Evaluation

Travel plan

Although formation of a SRTS planning task force and creation of a formal school travel plan are not a prerequisite for funding, applicants must include a statement describing how any infrastructure and/or non-infrastructure addresses the "5Es."

In the alternative, communities may use the SRTS travel plan format, which has been designed to be used in conjunction with the application form. If the travel plan is submitted with the application, sections 7 through 9 of the application do not have to be filled out. (*Funding Criteria* 1.a.1., 2.; Questions 7 through 9 of application form.)

Reimbursement funding is available for planning. Actual awards will be based on detailed budgets. **The maximum amount per school is \$15,000.** Plans involving more than one school are eligible for higher amounts, with recognition that some economies may be realized when multiple schools are studied.

Proposals for infrastructure projects will be viewed much more favorably if presented in the context of related plans for evaluation, education, encouragement and enforcement.

Surveys

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which administers the national SRTS program, is required to make progress reports to Congress. FHWA will accept information on changes in public perception of safety, the effects on students who participate, and increased awareness of safe walking and biking practices.

In the evaluation process, schools will calculate the number of students walking or cycling to school in comparison with students commuting by bus or private car. This will be measured before and after SRTS activities.

Other measurements can include the number of partnerships created through SRTS efforts, the number of schools and/or students reached through the program, affects on air quality and congestion, and the physical improvements such as the number of new facilities or miles of sidewalks and bike routes.

Recipients of reimbursement funding are required to submit a report based, at a minimum, on surveys conducted after programs and projects are completed.

In the evaluation process, communities must use the "student in-class travel tally" survey as well as the "parents survey" found at:
<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/index.cfm> Use of the bikeability and walkability checklists found at the same location is strongly recommended.
(*Funding Criteria 1.a.2.; Question 8 on application form.*)

Education

Risks associated with walking or bicycling can be greatly reduced by stressing safe pedestrian and cycling behavior. Such education programs have the secondary benefit in teaching children about healthy lifestyles and making them aware of environmental issues.

Safety education programs can range from one-time events like school assemblies to more comprehensive safety instruction integrated into courses in math, science, reading, language arts, geography and health. Safety lessons can be reinforced through school communications

systems such as school-wide announcements, signs and posters, and newsletter articles.

Bike and walking organizations and the local police can play a valuable role in the education component. Biking organizations, for example, can help schools find qualified safety instructors. Police in many communities sponsor bike rodeos, one-day events in which children are given both instructions and an opportunity to practice new skills. More in-depth training, often provided by the biking and/or walking organizations, stretches for five to 10 hours over several sessions. (*Funding Criteria 1.b; Question 8 on application form.*)

Encouragement

More children should be willing to walk or pedal to school if they recognize the idea as enjoyable.

A one-day event, such as participation in Walk To School Day (<http://www.walktoschool.org/>) can be an excellent way to kick off a local SRTS program. Obviously, a school can expand this approach, running it for a longer period and integrating it with other themes and events, including Earth Day, Bike Month, as well as bicycle-to-work, car-free, and traffic-safety days.

Popular approaches include the escort programs known as "walking school bus" and "rolling bicycle train." Children from a neighborhood are escorted to school by an adult volunteer, possibly a parent who would otherwise take time to drive one or two kids. A major advantage of this approach is that it alleviates parental fears that a child walking or pedaling alone could be kidnapped or bullied. Parents have also reported that such community events give them a chance to meet and socialize with neighbors. If walkers and bikers meet at a parking lot or similar gathering place, a walking school bus or bicycle train can include children who live beyond the two-mile radius for the SRTS program.

Mileage clubs and contests can encourage kids to keep up with their new activities. Our state's SRTS program plans to work in partnership with Walk New Hampshire, which recognizes individuals whose accumulated mileage represents a trip the length or width of the Granite State. (*Funding Criteria 1.c.; Question 8 on application form.*)

Enforcement

Speeding motorists or drivers who fail to stop at marked crosswalks can put children at-risk near elementary schools. Comments are often made that fear of bullies, kidnappers or child molesters can prompt parents to drive their offspring to school.

Communities across the country have come up with creative solutions ranging from increased law enforcement and ticketing to Neighborhood Speed Watch activities modeled on the Neighborhood Watch crime-prevention program. Others have had success with a highly publicized "progressive ticketing" approach. Under such a program, increased police visibility is initially augmented by warnings issued to violators. Those who don't get the message will be ticketed and fined. Speed trailers or monitors that display the posted speed limit and a motorist's speed clocked by radar can be an effective deterrent.

The escort programs listed under "encouragement" above - walking school bus or rolling bicycle trains - help in addressing the crime issues.

(Funding Criteria 1.d.; Question 8 on application form.)

Infrastructure

Engineering

These are the so-called "infrastructure" projects that will require some construction work. Painting crosswalks and erecting new signs are relatively inexpensive projects. Some schools could use SRTS funds to pay for bike racks. Installing or repairing sidewalks linking neighborhoods to schools require a large expenditure. Building a bike path or painting stripes along a roadway shoulder to mark a safe biking route are possibilities.

To ensure the widest distribution of infrastructure funds, awards will be limited to \$100,000 in the Round 2 funding cycle.

Project estimates included in the application should be prepared by the municipal public works department, highway department, road agent or other qualified individual. They

must clearly indicate the width, length and materials used for any sidewalk or pathway.

Estimates should include: the quantities of each material anticipated, the anticipated cost of these materials, and the labor costs associated with the construction (if not included in the material costs). In addition, consideration should be given to the cost associated with possible drainage issues, right-of-way purchases or easements, tree removal, embankment or fill materials needed, and other costs generally associated with construction. Though rough estimates of these items are acceptable, the more detail provided the better.

Federal guidelines published by FHWA for infrastructure projects include the following examples:

- **Sidewalk improvements:** new sidewalks, sidewalk widening, sidewalk gap closures, sidewalk repairs, curbs, gutters, and curb ramps.
- **Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements:** roundabouts, bulb-outs, speed humps, raised crossings, raised intersections, median refuges, narrowed traffic lanes, lane reductions, full- or half-street closures, automated speed enforcement, and variable speed limits.
- **Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements:** crossings, median refuges, raised crossings, raised intersections, traffic control devices (including new or upgraded traffic signals, pavement markings, traffic stripes, in-roadway crossing lights, flashing beacons, bicycle-sensitive signal actuation devices, pedestrian countdown signals, vehicle speed feedback signs, and pedestrian activated signal upgrades), and sight distance improvements.
- **On-street bicycle facilities:** new or upgraded bicycle lanes, widened outside lanes or roadway shoulders, geometric improvements, turning lanes, channelization and roadway realignment, traffic signs, and pavement markings.
- **Off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities:** exclusive multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails and pathways that are separated from a roadway.
- **Secure bicycle parking facilities:** bicycle parking racks, bicycle lockers, designated areas with safety lighting, and covered bicycle shelters.

- **Traffic diversion improvements:** separation of pedestrians and bicycles from vehicular traffic adjacent to school facilities, and traffic diversion away from school zones or designated routes to a school.

(*Funding Criteria 1.e.*; Questions 9-11 of the application form.)

Federal Highway Administration guidelines

FHWA's detailed guidelines on the use of SRTS funds may be found at

<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/srtsguidance.htm>

Applicants should note that reoccurring costs are not eligible for SRTS funding. Examples of ineligible costs specifically described in the federal guidelines include crossing guard pay and reorganizing pick-up and drop-off areas primarily for the convenience of drivers rather than to improve child safety and/or walking and bicycling access.

Communities with minimal resources

The FHWA guidelines state:

- **Objective #2: Make the Program Accessible to Diverse Participants**

State programs should be easily accessible to schools and communities in rural, suburban and urban settings, especially those with fewer local resources and limited ability to afford new initiatives. This is particularly important, as school zones in low income areas often have higher than average child pedestrian crash rates, and have the greatest need for a SRTS program, yet may have limited resources to access these funds. In addition, there are many States with a high percentage of rural schools that should be given the opportunity to participate in this program in an appropriate way.

States are encouraged to review and analyze bike and pedestrian crash data and consider setting aside some funds to provide assistance to schools in areas with higher than average child crash rates. Targeted outreach and technical assistance efforts may be required to ensure that low income communities in urban or rural settings can fairly compete for SRTS funds. Assistance may be needed with technical assessment, preparation of grant applications, or capacity development. Careful development of project selection criteria will also help reinforce the importance of addressing equity issues in SRTS programs.

For up to 20 bonus points, applicants are invited to submit evidence that they qualify for this special consideration. Evidence includes, but is not limited to: median household income; eligibility under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; and rates of free and/or reduced lunches. (*Funding Criteria 3; Question 2 on application form.*)

Be creative

The ideas presented here are based on the successes of school communities that have participated in SRTS and similar programs over the years. They are intended as examples to inspire creative thinking. Members of the local task force will have the best ideas about what will work in their particular circumstances.

Funding award process

Applications will initially be reviewed and scored by the Regional Planning Commission representing the community where the school or other organization is located.

Final recommendations will be made by a statewide panel made up of representatives of the following:

Organization	Number
Regional Planning Commissions	2
Metropolitan Planning Organizations	2
Walkable-Livable communities or similar community design organization	1
Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire or similar organization	1
N.H. Department of Health and Human Services	1
N.H. Department of Education	1
NHDOT Director of Project Development	1
NHDOT Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator	1
NHDOT SRTS Coordinator (non-voting)	1
Federal Highway Administration (non-voting)	1
Total voting members	10